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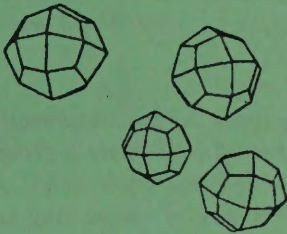


# **FAC** Sheet

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

ELY DISTRICT OFFICE

HC 33 Box 33500, Ely, Nevada 89301-9408



## **GARNET FIELDS ROCKHOUND AREA ELY BLM DISTRICT**

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**Garnet Fields Rockhound Area** is located between 3½ and 5½ air miles northwest of central Ely, Nevada in the Egan Mountain Range. The major access road to this area joins US Highway 50 about 6.4 miles west of the traffic signal at the US 93 and US 50 junction in Ely (¼ mile north of the turnoff to Ruth). See the area map on the reverse side of this page.

Locally referred to as **Garnet Hill**, this nationally known rockhounding area is famous for its dark red garnets found in volcanic rock.

This 1280-acre area of your public lands was designated on December 22, 1970 to ensure continued public ownership for its recreational and scientific study values.

Limited camping space for tents and small RV's is available. Other facilities include a group camp fire area and a wheelchair accessible toilet. Five tables are located near or west of the parking area near the top of Garnet Hill. This parking area is about 3.1 miles east of US 50, and access is provided on a winding and somewhat steep graded road. The access road is suitable for use by sedans and other passenger vehicles.

Garnet Hill is one of the better locations to view the large open pit copper mine and multi-colored waste rock dumps at the nearby Robinson Mining District.



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Garnets can be found in two different ways.

One method involves searching the surface and drainages for the dark-colored stones that have weathered from the pink to grey-colored rhyolite rock. Carefully inspect low spots and gullies. As garnets weather from the source rock they are washed downhill and collect in pockets, much like a gold placer deposit. Canyons located south of Garnet Hill and either side of the former community of Lane are good places to explore. Rather than drive to Garnet Hill one can also park at the large pullout on US 50 (4 miles from Ely or 1.1 from the junction to Ruth)-- marked with \*P\* on the map. A hike up the adjacent drainage will usually be rewarded by finding garnets.

Another more arduous, but sometimes more rewarding method, is to break the garnet-bearing rock with a pick or hammer to reveal the gems. This appears to be a popular method as evidenced by the mounds of rock cobbles near Garnet Hill.

The garnets usually occur as single crystals attached to small cavities known as vugs or vesicles within the rhyolite. When searching for source rocks, look for material that has veins or cavities lined with quartz. Carefully break the rock to see what is inside. When a garnet is exposed it can be left in the rock, or carefully extracted by using a stout pocket knife or similar tool. Garnets are hard, but brittle, and may shatter like glass if they are not carefully removed.

Several new pits located a short distance east of the parking area are good places to dig because the rock surface is not hidden by other collectors' rubble. Outcrops of rhyolite occur along the ridge extending southwest of Garnet Hill. The southwest summit of the ridge (elevation 7,339 feet) has been reported to contain better quality gemstones.



Garnet Hill gems are of the variety known as *Almandine*, named after *Alabanda*, an ancient town in Asia Minor. Almandine garnets are composed of iron-aluminum-silica-oxygen (chemical formula=  $Fe_3 Al_2 Si_3 O_{12}$ ), and vary from brownish-red to hyacinth-red in color. The dark color of these garnets is due their high iron content. Garnets from this locality also contain some manganese, which is the major element found in the *Spessartine* variety of garnets. Most of the garnets found in this area have natural flaws, although some perfect gem quality stones can be found. It has been reported that small crystals of topaz have also been found at Garnet Hill, but this report has not been confirmed.

Other varieties of garnets found elsewhere that have different chemical compositions are *Pyrope* (deep red to reddish black, sometimes purple), *Almandine* (deep red to brown), *Grossular* (colorless, white, yellow, pink, green or brown), *Andradite* (wine red, greenish, yellow, brown or black), and *Uvarovite* (emerald-green).

Garnets can also be found at these locations within 100 miles of Ely : **Ruby Hill** (spessartine garnets) in Humboldt National Forest-- Township 21 North, Range 65 East; **Hampton Creek** (industrial-grade almandine garnets in placer deposits) near the Utah border and Mt. Moriah-- T 16 N, R 70 E; and **White Horse Mountain** (almandine garnets plus quartz crystals and unusual marble selections) in southern Elko County-- T 28 N, R 68 E.



